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Questions relating to information

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

During the first half of 2007, the Department of Public Information continued to address key thematic priorities of the Organization, including issues relating to peace and security, climate change, the Millennium Development Goals and human rights. The Department has continued to expand its reach through the daily delivery of news and information products via radio, television and print and reaches an ever-widening global audience for text and audio-visual material via the World Wide Web. Using a combination of traditional means of communications and new information and communications technologies, the Department worked in close cooperation with Member States, United Nations system partners and civil society to expand its outreach and promotional activities. Increased emphasis was placed on reaching out to students and youth groups. The network of United Nations information centres played a key role in implementing the Department's communications goals. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued its transition to a knowledge service for the Organization. Further steps were also taken to strengthen the culture of evaluation at all levels of the Department's work. As a result, the Department's public information capacity was strengthened.

* A/62/150.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/121 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session and to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in that resolution. Accordingly, the Department of Public Information introduced three reports for consideration by the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session, held from 30 April to 11 May 2007 (A/AC.198/2007/2-4). The deliberations of the Committee with regard to those reports are reflected in its report to the General Assembly.[1]

2. The present report, prepared in response to the above-mentioned resolution, updates the information already provided to the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session and describes activities undertaken in the past six months by the Department through its four subprogrammes: strategic communication services, news services, library services and outreach services.

II. Strategic communication services

A. Thematic issues

Peacekeeping

3. The Department of Public Information has continued to enhance its outreach on peacekeeping, particularly to troop-contributing countries. An exhibition of photographs relating to the successfully completed peacekeeping mission in Burundi opened at United Nations Headquarters in January and subsequently went on display in South Africa, a major troop contributor to that mission, and in Geneva. In connection with the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers (29 May), a multimedia exhibition featuring stories about individual peacekeepers opened at United Nations Headquarters. The exhibition, which was reproduced on the United Nations website, will travel to several countries. The Department also reached out to the home countries of those individuals and other peacekeepers, including all those memorialized on the Day, with targeted public information campaigns. This resulted in media coverage of peacekeeping in all targeted troop- and police-contributing countries. The Department of Public Information, with the support of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, also produced a film for worldwide distribution.

4. The Department of Public Information United Nations *News Centre* portal, one of the most heavily visited segments on the United Nations website, and the associated United Nations *News Service*, considerably expanded their coverage of the important role played by United Nations police in peace operations around the world. Stories produced by the United Nations *News Service* also served as the basis for the inaugural issue of the *UN Police* magazine, produced in early 2007.

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/62/21).

Box 1
International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

On the occasion of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, United Nations information centres and other Department of Public Information field offices carried out numerous activities, often in collaboration with local government authorities and civil society groups.

The United Nations Information Centre in Bucharest, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, organized an exhibition of photographs taken by Romanian peacekeepers and a debate on the protection of civilians in conflict areas.

The United Nations Information Centre in Dhaka and Dhaka University co-organized a seminar on the role of Bangladesh in United Nations peacekeeping.

The United Nations Information Centre in Islamabad organized a briefing session with the Senate of Pakistan.

The United Nations Office in Ukraine co-organized an international conference on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping and peacekeepers in the twenty-first century".

The United Nations Information Centre in Lima coordinated the issuance of a special report on United Nations peacekeeping with the leading daily newspaper *El Comercio*.

The United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria and the South African National Defence Force arranged a commemorative wreath-laying ceremony at the Pretoria public library.

The United Nations Information Centre in Rabat produced and distributed a special press kit.

The United Nations Information Centre in Tehran published a Persian translation of the Department of Public Information booklet *United Nations peacekeeping: meeting new challenges* on its website.

Darfur

5. The Department of Public Information raised public awareness of United Nations action with regard to Darfur through a series of briefing notes containing the most recent developments and core messages on Darfur for the use of United Nations information centres and other United Nations communications officials. A fact sheet was also produced for distribution to the general public entitled "The United Nations and Darfur". Ongoing communications work is focusing on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations hybrid operation in Darfur.

Climate change

6. In order to better integrate communications on climate change issues throughout the United Nations system and have a greater impact, the Department of Public Information has convened a communications task force of 15 United Nations entities working on climate change with a view to setting up and implementing a system-wide strategy. The strategy is aimed at elevating the issue of climate change to the highest level of decision-making, positioning the United Nations system as a key player on the basis of its comparative advantages, identifying opportunities and deploying the most effective communications tools. The Department has coordinated inter-agency efforts to promote the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It has also identified key events on the climate change agenda that could benefit from joint communication efforts, including the General Assembly's informal thematic debate on climate change, held in July; the Secretary-General's high-level event, to be held in September; the Panel's fourth assessment report, to be released in Valencia, Spain, in November; and the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December. The Department collaborated with the task force on the development of a system-wide Internet portal, "Gateway to the United Nations system's work on climate change", which it designed and which was launched in August. The United Nations information centres have been instrumental in promoting efforts to address climate change at the national level.

Millennium Development Goals

7. This year, which marks the halfway point towards the Millennium Development Goal target date of 2015, the Department of Public Information has stepped up its efforts to promote the Goals as a priority issue. The Department has brought together more than 10 United Nations system partners with a view to developing a common communications strategy and shared messages to increase awareness of and build support for the Goals. Key activities undertaken include:

(a) The launch of the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2007*. In addition to the global launch of the report on 2 July by the Secretary-General during the substantive session the Economic and Social Council in Geneva, more than a dozen major regional and national launch events, as well as many other smaller press briefings, were organized around the world thanks to increased inter-agency cooperation and the active involvement of the United Nations information centres. This generated wide coverage, including by broadcast media such as BBC World, China Central Television, the ARD television network in Germany and TV3 and TV4 in Sweden, as well as by print media, including *The Economist*;

(b) An advance report excerpt on Africa and the Millennium Development Goals which was unveiled by the Deputy Secretary-General on 6 June at United Nations Headquarters to coincide with the Group of Eight Summit. Substantial coverage was generated in the international press (*International Herald Tribune*, Associated Press and Reuters, for example), and in North America by key media outlets including the *Washington Post*. Coverage was equally significant in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Latin America.

8. The United Nations information centres continue to provide strong support in promoting the Millennium Development Goals. Information centres in Algiers,

Cairo, Mexico City, Moscow, Nairobi, New Delhi, Pretoria, Tokyo and Yaoundé, as well as the United Nations information service in Bangkok, were among those hosting media events to support the launch of the *Millennium Development Goals Report*.

Human rights

9. Two fact sheets on the Human Rights Council were produced: an account of its activities during its first year; and an outline of the outcome of the Council's institution-building process and the continuing role of the special procedures. The Department regularly acts as media liaison for the Council President during and between sessions in Geneva.

10. Communications support was provided for the sixth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May, the 2007 session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the celebration of International Women's Day in March. Media outreach by the Department of Public Information on these occasions resulted in wide media coverage of indigenous and women's issues.

The Question of Palestine

11. The fifteenth International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East was held in Tokyo in June on the theme "Restoring the path to peace: re-engaging Israelis and Palestinians in the search for a comprehensive and lasting political settlement". The main objective of the seminar was to promote continued dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian representatives. Nearly 100 participants attended, including 10 Israeli representatives, among whom were a member of the Knesset, two current mayors and a former mayor; 7 Palestinians, including the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, the Mayor of Ramallah and — via videoconference — the Director of the State Information Service and Media Adviser to the President; and representatives of international media.

The Department of Public Information and the New Partnership for Africa's Development

12. The Department continued to raise public awareness of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and to generate support for its implementation. The quarterly magazine *Africa Renewal* continues to be central to this effort. It has a large per-issue readership, mostly in Africa, North America and Europe, and an additional audience online at www.un.org/AR. Key activities included:

(a) The production of a number of feature articles designed to promote NEPAD priority issues in the mass media. The most successful dealt with migration, brain drain, the Millennium Development Goals, Africa as a United Nations priority, solar power, job creation and China-Africa business ties. Publishers of these articles included *Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), *Afrika Hoje* (African lusophone countries), *East African Standard* (Kenya) and *People's Daily* (China);

(b) A series of articles on the theme "NEPAD in action", describing how the New Partnership is making a difference in the lives of Africans, was picked up by Africa-interest websites and reproduced in 64 publications, including *L'Hebdomadaire* (Burkina Faso), *Accra Daily Mail* (Ghana), *L'Essor* (Mali), *Sud Quotidien* (Senegal), *Business Day* and *Mail & Guardian* (South Africa).

Africa Renewal published a special issue on HIV/AIDS in Africa that continues to be very popular, in both English and French, with activist groups and has been reprinted in French. It is also widely requested as a teaching tool by universities and schools in Africa and North America.

Lessons from Rwanda outreach programme

13. In the context of an outreach programme on the theme "Lessons from Rwanda: the United Nations and the prevention of genocide", the Department of Public Information organized a number of events in connection with the thirteenth anniversary of the genocide in April 2007, including film screenings and discussions held by United Nations information centres in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, Panama City, Prague, Tehran and Windhoek. At United Nations Headquarters, the Department provided assistance to the Permanent Mission of Rwanda for a screening of the film *Beyond the Gates* and launched an exhibition entitled "Lessons from Rwanda" on 30 April. The Department is partnering with organizations in Africa to show English, French and Kinyarwanda versions of the exhibition throughout the remainder of 2007. Planning continued for other projects to be undertaken as part of this programme, including a website in all official languages; television and radio programmes on the lasting impact of the genocide on survivors, in particular orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence; and a photography project.

Counter-terrorism

14. Following the adoption by the General Assembly in September 2006 of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Department of Public Information launched a new counter-terrorism website that provides a user-friendly and comprehensive overview of all aspects of the United Nations system's counter-terrorism actions, with a focus on implementing the Global Strategy and highlighting the actions of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. It also hosts the Counter-Terrorism Online Handbook, designed to assist Member States in tracking United Nations counter-terrorism efforts.

B. United Nations information centres

15. The 63 information centres, services and components around the world are progressively maximizing their value as strategic assets of the Department through enhanced public outreach as well as close collaboration with the United Nations country teams in their locations.

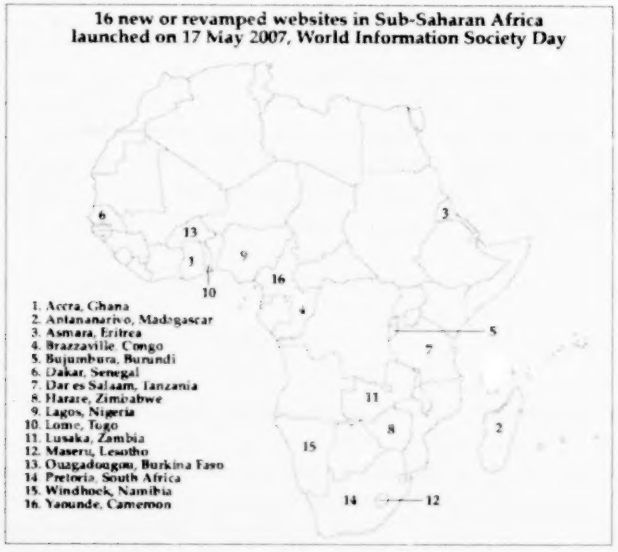
16. The Department has continued its efforts to rationalize the work of the United Nations information centres. It has strengthened the leadership of the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria, enabling them to assist neighbouring centres in strategic planning and work programmes. Regional communications groups have been convened to discuss common United Nations communications concerns and opportunities and to develop joint projects on key issues. In other areas, the entire network of field offices benefits from the strengths of the centres thanks to an improved system of internal communications and collaboration within the Department. For example, the Department increasingly relies on the United Nations information centres in Cairo and Mexico City for, respectively, Arabic and

Spanish translations of information material generated by Headquarters, for use both at Headquarters and by field offices. This new collaboration has increased efficiency and allowed for translations to be made available more quickly.

17. In Europe, the regional information centre in Brussels and the information services in Geneva and Vienna are also collaborating with each other and with other information centres in ways that take advantage of their respective strengths, information networks and locations.

18. Innovative forms of collaboration and resource-sharing within the field network of the Department led to a milestone achievement in terms of its outreach in Africa this year, when 16 new or revamped websites for United Nations information centres in sub-Saharan Africa were launched on 17 May, World Information Society Day. The project was made possible by the collaboration of information technology staff from the United Nations regional information centre in Brussels, United Nations information centres in the region and Department headquarters, who employed a technology that allows separate websites to be established from a common base. African centres can now concentrate on posting content without requiring individual centres to disburse funds for their own electronic architecture. As a result, the total number of websites operating in sub-Saharan Africa has grown from 4 in 2005 to 17 in 2007. All Department field offices now have functional websites delivering the United Nations message to local audiences in 33 languages.

Figure I



United Nations Communications Group at the country level

19. Since 2006, United Nations communications groups, comprising the information focal points of United Nations agencies, have been formed in nearly all of the countries where information centres are based. In most cases, the United

Nations information centre chairs the local communications group. Given the emphasis on greater United Nations system-wide coherence, United Nations information centres are playing an increasingly prominent role in communications at the country level, and the Department accords great importance to their work with the United Nations country team. This issue was the focus of a workshop for the communications officers of all of the information centres in the Americas, held in São Paulo, Brazil, in May 2007. United Nations information centres in Dar es Salaam and Islamabad are taking part in One United Nations pilot projects.

Box 2
United Nations Communications Group annual meeting in Madrid

The sixth annual meeting of principals of the United Nations Communications Group was held in Madrid at the headquarters of the World Tourism Organization on 21 and 22 June 2007, with representatives from 37 United Nations system organizations and offices in attendance. A central focus of the meeting was the role of communications and public information in the context of greater United Nations system-wide coherence, especially the One United Nations initiative. A key recommendation was to establish a closer relationship between the United Nations Communications Group and the High-Level Committee on Programmes of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, so that communications dimensions are taken into account when policy issues are brought before the Board.

Discussions also focused on three key priority areas for the United Nations system: the threat of avian and human influenza pandemics; the midpoint review of the Millennium Development Goals; and climate change. The United Nations Communications Group members agreed that they would participate in Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China, under a common United Nations pavilion and that the initiative would be led by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme as the United Nations system's focal point.

III. News services

A. Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General

20. The Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General conducts the daily noon briefing and keeps the press, delegations and the public informed, not only about the work of the Secretary-General, but also about developments throughout the United Nations system. During the past year (July 2006 to June 2007), the Spokesperson held 245 press briefings. The Office also organized 36 press conferences given by the Secretary-General at Headquarters and abroad, 76 press briefings by Member States, 130 press conferences by senior officials and 15 background briefings. In addition, the Office coordinated 97 press encounters and 114 press interviews with the Secretary-General at Headquarters and during his official visits to Member States.

B. United Nations website

21. Twelve years ago, the United Nations entered the age of the Internet with the launch of the United Nations website — www.un.org. Since 1995, the website has become an essential tool for global audiences, providing a wide range of news and information in various languages and in multiple forms. Every minute of every day, nearly 700 pages of material in the six official languages are being viewed by users; more than a million pages and more than 15,000 video clips are viewed every 24 hours.

New pages created and pages updated in first six months of 2007

	Arabic	*Chinese*	*English*	*French*	*Russian*	*Spanish*
New pages	779	1 018	872	584	1 155	641
Updated pages	2 980	3 888	3 230	1 275	2 639	4 477

22. Between September 2006 and June 2007, 21 multilingual websites were created or redesigned for, inter alia, the General Assembly, the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General. They included a database of declarations and conventions contained in General Assembly resolutions and websites for such special events as the "Water for Life" Decade and the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

23. Internet broadcasting, or webcasting, has become a cost-effective and efficient tool to deliver major United Nations events in real time to audiences around the world. During the first half of 2007, some 7 million visitors from about 200 countries and territories viewed webcasts from either live or archived webcast pages. The number of subscribers to the e-mail webcast alert system increased from 6,000 in 2006 to over 9,000 in the first half of 2007. Major achievements during the past year included the webcast of all sessions of the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Council, both held in Geneva. At present, webcasts of all open meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council are available in English and the floor language. In view of the continuous increase in demand, the expansion of webcasting to include other languages is being actively pursued.

Accessibility for persons with disabilities

24. In keeping with General Assembly resolutions, the main pages of the United Nations website in the six official languages have been revised to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. These pages feature accessibility level I and II compliance with World Wide Web Consortium guidelines. Level I consists of minimum requirements, while level II requirements provide for enhanced access for persons with disabilities. All new pages created by the Web Services Section are compliant with level I, and most comply with level II. New guidelines have been put in place by the Web Services Section in order to monitor compliance with accessibility levels. Many Secretariat staff members have been trained in that connection, and the necessary software tools have been procured and installed. This new effort has, however, resulted in an increase of about 20 per cent in the average production time for new web pages.

Towards website governance and a content management system

25. Since its inception, the United Nations website has grown enormously in terms of multilingual text material and the amount of audio, graphics and video material available. There is therefore a need for a robust and secure content management system that can grow and develop. That, in turn, would lead to greater efficiencies in the management of multilingual web content as varied as that of the United Nations. Work is in progress to introduce such a content management system with a streamlined architecture, enabling easier backup of content and standardization of presentation, as well as addressing the requirement that all information technology systems be interoperable. It would also assist in the enforcement of agreed standards and ensure uniformity of statistics criteria and other web metrics among languages and a more accurate and efficient analysis of website usage.

26. A revitalized governance mechanism supported by the content management system will provide the necessary environment for facilitating the top-down rearchitecture and consolidation of existing websites, incorporating current best practices for site management, usability, disaster recovery, business continuity and security. The Department of Public Information is pursuing the issue of Internet governance with the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management and is working through the Information and Communications Technology Board and the Publications Board with a view to establishing new technical standards and an improved governance system, together with an expanded awareness, training and education programme. In preparation for the content management system, the top layers of the United Nations website are being revamped to render it more dynamic, attractive and easily navigable and to make it a true gateway to the range of information available throughout the site.

Integrated news portal

27. In keeping with the principle of the integration of websites, and recognizing the growing role of the Internet as a source of news for audiences around the world, the Department's web strategy for its news operations is oriented towards the creation of a centralized gateway to specialized pages featuring text, photographs and audio and video material and the development of an integrated multimedia platform. Revamped audio, video and photo pages, backed by increased bandwidth and storage capacity, will enable database-driven retrieval of related content in a variety of formats, from broadcast-quality radio and television news reports and feature programmes to photo galleries and webcast files.

28. As part of the overall effort to streamline and centralize sites, a recent revamping of the United Nations *News Centre* served to enhance the site's usability, navigation and graphic design, as well as to improve users' access to a wide range of news-related content, including an expanding array of the Department's multimedia products made available online. Greater emphasis on interactivity was another important aspect of the redesign, which incorporated such popular Internet tools as a most-read-stories feature and a current-events-based quiz. At the same time, several indicators testified to the increasing popularity of the United Nations *News Service*: the number of subscribers to its e-mail news alerts grew steadily to over 50,000 (English and French), as did the usage of its Really Simple Syndication feature. Moreover, its stories gained visibility on popular search engines, such as Google

News, including through increased pick-up by news aggregator sites and a variety of other media outlets.

C. Placement of opinion and editorial articles

29. As part of its continuing efforts to engage the public in the debate on a wide range of vital issues on the United Nations agenda, the Department of Public Information assisted senior United Nations officials in placing their articles in newspapers and other media outlets around the world. Over the past year, the Department used the services of a focal point at Headquarters, as well as its worldwide network of information centres, to ensure the placement of some 30 op-ed pieces, a third of them by the Secretary-General. Those articles appeared in more than 550 newspapers in multiple languages. One example of the scope of the placement effort is an article by the Secretary-General entitled "Why the world has changed in the UN's favour", which was first published in the 4 June 2007 international edition of *Newsweek* and was subsequently carried by 60 papers in 40 countries with an estimated readership of well over 5 million.

D. Other services to media

30. The Department continues to provide coverage, in the form of press releases, of all open intergovernmental meetings, as well as of press conferences. In the first six months of 2007, the Department produced a total of 1,997 such releases (8,701 pages) in English and French.

31. The Department also continues to facilitate access for media to cover United Nations activities at Headquarters and overseas by providing accreditation, liaison and other services through its Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit. From January to May 2007, the Department issued 652 permanent and 664 temporary press accreditations, performed 1,846 liaison assignments and distributed 108 media alerts to media organizations, mission press attachés and others in the United Nations system. The Department conducted 20 tours for groups of students and professional journalists and provided information and logistical assistance for 190 media stake-outs. During that period, 173 press conferences/briefings were held, attended by 5,428 journalists.

E. Radio, television and photo services

United Nations Radio

32. Aware of the important role radio can play in spreading the United Nations message, the Department has continued to strengthen its radio programming and expand its partnerships with international broadcasters. The radio website in the six official languages, as well as those in Portuguese and Kiswahili, were given major technical overhauls two years ago and the amount of material on each site has increased. The Department also posts its programming on the United Nations Radio website in four Asian languages — Bangla, Hindi, Urdu and Indonesian — as well as in French Creole.

33. The new radio pages use database-driven technology, which enables much more rapid downloading and easier, faster searching. These improvements also enable broadcasters and the general public to find a broader range of material, such as unedited interviews and speeches. The United Nations Radio News Service, funded by the United Nations Foundation, continues to serve North American and European radio audiences with short news reports, features and raw audio via the Web — a service that is being extended to other audiences.

34. The direct promotion and marketing of United Nations Radio and United Nations Television programmes and services to broadcasters through participation in industry markets and conferences has raised awareness of the United Nations as a media partner. These efforts have attracted interest from well-established producers with high-profile projects that will bring international attention to the issue of environmental degradation and other themes of importance to the United Nations.

35. Improvements in delivery systems, together with the active promotion of its programmes, have facilitated the further expansion of United Nations Radio's audience reach. The number of radio and television partners has already increased, from 317 in December 2005 to 367 in June 2007, confirming the continued increase in United Nations Radio's listeners.

United Nations Television

36. "UNifeed", an inter-agency satellite news service spearheaded by the Department in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund, continues to offer timely field video six days a week to a worldwide network of international networks via the world's largest television news agency, Associated Press Television News, and the European Broadcasting Union. The Department is also planning to make video news stories available in broadcast quality on the Web in the next few months.

37. With a view to offering a more in-depth perspective on United Nations issues, a 26-minute television news magazine show, *21st Century*, was launched in January and is being used by more than 30 television stations. This dynamic, polished programme has replaced *World Chronicle*, a talk show that was no longer attracting audiences, according to a survey commissioned by the Department. The production of *UN in Action*, a weekly feature on the work of the United Nations, continues, as does the United Nations contribution to *CNN World Report*. A United Nations Television story on child brides was recently honoured by CNN with the Best Feature Report award.

United Nations Photo

38. The Department has adopted a multipronged approach to harnessing technology to produce audio-visual content in the formats desired by current media consumers and to streamline its own internal production and distribution mechanisms.

39. The digital photo system — Networked Interactive Content Access — is being enriched with up-to-date images captured at United Nations Headquarters and in many parts of the world, while a large number of legacy photographs from the archives are being restored. With the assistance of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, cooperative arrangements are being established with various

peacekeeping missions to swap high-resolution images through an enhanced File Transfer Protocol mechanism. This will be further improved through a strengthened delivery and storage mechanism.

40. To facilitate the distribution of United Nations photographs, the United Nations Photo website has been upgraded to enable requests for high-resolution photographs to be filled online, thereby providing faster service to clients and decreasing the workload for the photo service staff, while also providing improved data on the users of United Nations photographs. The site also recently added most-downloaded-photos and most-viewed-photos pages, offering a greater level of interactivity with the site for visitors. The Department has been working closely with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in showcasing thematic collections of photographs in various locations at United Nations Headquarters.

41. The Department is now preparing to transform its conventional print photo boards on the third floor of the Secretariat Building and at the entrance to the cafeteria into a state-of-the-art high-definition electronic photo display system. The Department will also install a similar large-format electronic photo display in the public lobby, where high-resolution videos, promotional trailers and public service announcements can also be shown to publicize the work of the Department and the United Nations in general.

F. Print products

42. A new edition of *Basic Facts About the United Nations* is being prepared and will be submitted for printing before the end of 2007. *United Nations in Brief* will be updated in 2008, as will the online Image & Reality.

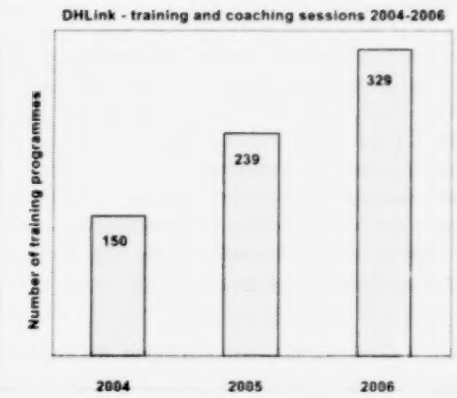
IV. Library services

A. Library and knowledge services

43. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continues its transition to a knowledge service for the Organization following the direction set in the report of the Secretary-General on new strategic directions for United Nations libraries (A/AC.198/2005/4) and its follow-up report (A/AC.198/2006/2).

44. Through the Personal Knowledge Management programme and the Library's ongoing training programmes, the information needs of Secretariat and mission staff are addressed in a customized way for the user. The Personnel Knowledge Management initiative helps individuals to understand how to better create, manage and access information and to improve their utilization of the vast array of technology tools at their disposal. The Library's training programmes were revised in 2007 to more closely address the changing needs of clients and now include courses on such subjects as how to search the Internet and how to find information on sustainable development. Training in non-English language resources on the Web is being organized.

Figure II



45. Support for the One United Nations initiative through internal communications for the Secretariat has been one of the Library's most visible activities. The Library promotes the active use of iSeek, the Intranet of the Secretariat, as the internal communications tool at all duty stations and is seeking to strengthen the network of iSeek focal points. The Department has also encouraged all United Nations funds and programmes to access iSeek on the basis of reciprocal access agreements to their respective Intranets. In June 2007, iSeek became available to the Economic Commission for Africa secretariat in Addis Ababa. The United Nations Office at Nairobi is also planning to use iSeek as its primary internal communications tool by the third quarter of 2007.

46. The Library is working more actively on outreach through the transformation of its depository library programme to reflect the changing role of libraries. Activities to support new methods of disseminating United Nations information through partnerships with United Nations information centres and depository libraries in developing countries are being developed. A regional workshop to promote knowledge sharing on the theme "Creating partnerships with libraries in Asia", organized with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to be held in Bangkok in October, will provide an opportunity to discuss those new approaches with participating libraries.

47. Access to information via electronic means is increasingly important for the work of the Secretariat and missions. Through its management of the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium, the Library has facilitated access to high-quality information resources within the United Nations and in United Nations system offices throughout the world. Given the planned relocation of the Library's collections over an extended period during the capital master plan renovations, this transition to electronic access is especially crucial.

48. Providing access to important older United Nations documentation is a priority for the Library, which is partnering with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to increase the speed of retrospective digitization, since access to electronic information is increasingly becoming an imperative.

B. Educational outreach

49. Given that half of the world's population is under 25 years of age, engaging children and youth in and out of the classroom is critical to the future success of the United Nations. The Department's Educational Outreach Section has refocused its strategies by leveraging the digital revolution, the influence of celebrities and the global reach of media networks to make United Nations outreach more accessible to this key demographic group.

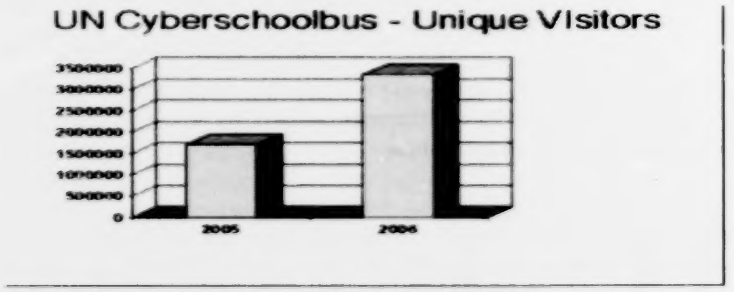
The United Nations Works programme

50. The United Nations Works programme has developed a strategic collaboration with MTV Networks, which has 164 channels in 103 countries and over a billion viewers, to educate and engage young people through television specials, news segments, website, radio and television spots and free online classroom resources. Following the success of the water and sanitation campaign featuring the hip-hop artist Jay-Z, United Nations Works and VH1/MTV Networks are engaging in multiplatform outreach about the Millennium Development Goals. This will include a celebrity-hosted television series and an online action centre to encourage young people to get involved. Outreach will also include non-traditional viewing platforms, including computers, mobile phones, portable media players and similar devices.

United Nations Cyberschoolbus

51. The number of unique visitors to the United Nations Cyberschoolbus website, which is part of the Department's Global Teaching and Learning Project, increased from 1,710,618 in 2005 to 3,342,889 in 2006. That represents a 95 per cent increase in the growth of users around the world. The number of page views increased during the same period by 20 per cent — from 10,499,604 in 2005 to 12,594,144 in 2006.

Figure III



Graphic design

52. The Department of Public Information continues to create visual branding for United Nations global campaigns on key issues. Notable examples include the award-winning poster design for the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, logo designs in connection with indigenous peoples and book designs for United Nations publications.

V. Outreach services

A. Services to civil society

Academic initiatives

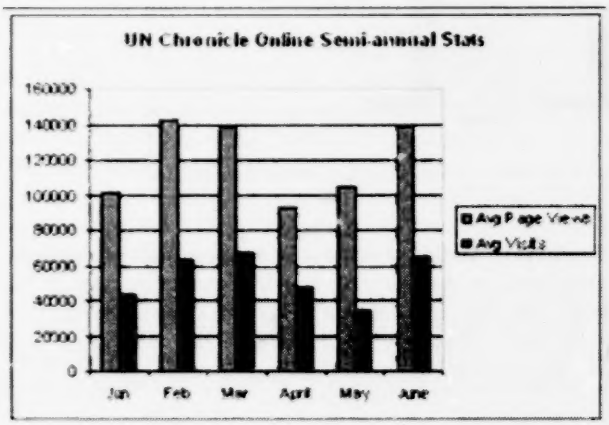
53. The Department continues to expand and deepen its relationship with the academic community, research institutions, civil society organizations and students. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* and the *UN Chronicle* are a key part of these efforts.

54. Each issue of *UN Chronicle* magazine is now devoted to one major theme of priority concern for the United Nations. For 2007, the themes are the United Nations, the Secretary-General and our lives (issue 1); climate change (issue 2); racial discrimination (issue 3); and the Millennium Development Goals (issue 4). The issue on climate change attracted exclusive contributions from the Secretary-General and high-level political leaders engaged in the international debate on climate change, including Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller of Jamaica, Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand and Prime Minister Apisai Ielemia of Tuvalu. The journal's high-level discourse is complemented by United Nations expert analyses of the impact of global warming and policy decisions at the regional and national levels.

55. In 2007, *UN Chronicle Online* will launch a redesigned website in all six official languages offering each issue of *UN Chronicle* magazine, as well as regular online-only content.

56. From January to June 2007, the *UN Chronicle Online* version in English registered an average of 120,000 page views per month — an increase of 21 per cent over the monthly average for 2006. Also in that period, the French online version, *Chronique ONU: Edition en ligne*, registered an average of 53,000 page views per month — a 28 per cent increase over the monthly average for the comparable period the previous year. Many of the journal's articles are reprinted, posted online, used in classrooms and cited in scholarly articles and books.

Figure IV



57. *UN Chronicle* e-Alerts have been sent to subscribers, posted on the Organization's Intranet, iSeek, for United Nations staff worldwide and distributed to educators and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) associated with the Department of Public Information.

58. Other academic outreach activities include the ongoing videoconferencing programme with students, professors and United Nations staff on issues of priority for the Organization. In April 2007, two such events — one on Darfur and one on inter-religious dialogue — were held in collaboration with the Global Consortium based at Cerritos College, California. Connections were also established with other colleges, in Cambodia, Germany and the United States of America, as well as in New Zealand and the wider Pacific Rim area. The Department also collaborated with the Film Your Issue competition, founded by an NGO in California, which encourages young people to produce short films on social and political issues of importance to them. This year, with the assistance of the network of United Nations information centres, the competition was extended for the first time beyond the United States, reaching out to youth in more than 50 countries. The Department included in the competition a special category for films on the issues of peace, tolerance and international migration and offered a certificate for the best film in that category. Other partners involved in the competition were *USA Today*, Yahoo!, Jumpcut, the cable network Starz and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

59. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* has since 1946 covered in detail United Nations proceedings, activities and bodies. It remains the primary authoritative reference work on the Organization, offering a comprehensive review of United Nations efforts in the service of humanity and of the ways in which international cooperation is working to better the lives of the world's peoples. Each edition is fully indexed and reproduces in full the texts of, and votes on, all major General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* continues to be widely consulted by diplomats, Government officials, scholars, journalists and others interested in the study of international and United Nations affairs.

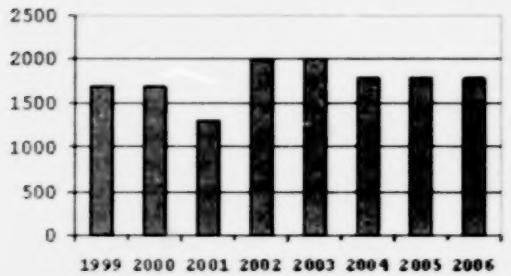
Non-governmental organizations

60. The Department of Public Information is tasked with managing the relationship between the Department and the 1,624 NGOs currently associated with it. Its weekly briefings, during which topics such as human trafficking, peacekeeping, partnership with the private sector and freedom of the press are discussed in an interactive and informative manner, provide a forum where NGOs can exchange views on issues closely identified with the work of the United Nations worldwide. NGOs have access to updated information about the United Nations, as well as United Nations publications, through the NGO Resource Centre, and use that venue for meetings and networking.

61. The Executive Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations Associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information, whose 18 members are elected by those NGOs, acts as the liaison between the NGO community and the Department. The three annual full-day communications workshops and the annual conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations are organized in partnership with that Committee.

62. The sixtieth annual Conference is scheduled to be held from 5 to 7 September 2007. Entitled "Climate change: how it impacts us all", the event will focus on the growing concerns associated with climate change and its profound and decisive impact on human well-being. The Conference aims to provide the necessary knowledge and inspiration for participants to carry their efforts forward. It will offer a solutions-oriented approach designed to encourage participants to create individual action plans to address this global challenge. In addition to three plenary sessions and seven round tables, there will be some 30 midday workshops in which representatives of civil society, the United Nations, Governments and the private sector will participate.

Figure V
NGO representatives at the annual Conference



Public relations

63. The Department responds to and makes contact with the general public through a number of services: responding to enquiries, mounting exhibitions in public areas at Headquarters, conducting guided tours, providing briefings and special programmes for educational institutions and other groups and organizing special events to generate interest in United Nations-related issues. As part of its efforts to reach the public, the Department organizes a six-week intensive programme on United Nations affairs for 15 journalists from developing countries.

Responses to public enquiries

64. Information about the United Nations and its activities is provided in response to letters, e-mails and facsimiles from the public and queries by telephone or in-person visits. Fact sheets and briefing papers are prepared and a website is maintained in all six official languages of the United Nations. Two main educational booklets have been reissued: *This is the UN*, an introduction to the Organization and major United Nations issues; and the more comprehensive *Everything you always wanted to know about the UN*.

Student observance

65. In June, the seventh annual videoconference student observance for World Environment Day was organized by the Department in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, linking students in Canada, Pakistan and the United States. The theme of the discussion was "Melting ice: a hot topic?" A student videoconference is planned to mark the International Day of Peace on 21 September, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations, peacekeeping missions and the Messengers of Peace programme. Last year's observance at United Nations Headquarters was attended by over 700 students and 6 Messengers of Peace. United Nations peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Kosovo participated via satellite. Another, similar, event will be the tenth annual student observance of Human Rights Day, to be held in December 2007.

Guided tours and briefings for visitors

66. For the fifth consecutive year, the guided tour operation saw an increase in the number of visitors buying tickets for tours of the United Nations Headquarters (437,000 in 2006). However, this trend will be completely reversed during the closure of the building to the public for several years during renovations. In conjunction with the tour, visiting groups often request briefings by United Nations officials on a wide range of United Nations-related topics. These briefings, as well as outside speaking engagements and videoconferences, are organized by the Department, which manages the United Nations Speakers' Bureau. From 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, it organized 1 850 in-house briefings, 43 outside speaking engagements and 13 videoconferences.

Messengers of Peace and Goodwill Ambassador programmes

67. The Department continues to oversee the Messengers of Peace programme and serves as the focal point for the system-wide Goodwill Ambassador programme. Both programmes enlist the volunteer services of prominent individuals to highlight issues of priority for the Organization. The Secretary-General is in the process of considering the appointment of new Messengers of Peace. In March, United Nations Messenger of Peace Anna Cataldi opened a photo exhibition entitled "A world free of TB", organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) in cooperation with the Department of Public Information. Ms. Cataldi also briefed NGOs and launched the 2007 WHO report *Global Tuberculosis Control* to help draw attention to the fact that tuberculosis is one of the world's leading infectious diseases — second only to HIV/AIDS.

The Holocaust and the United Nations outreach programme

68. The Holocaust and the United Nations outreach programme expanded its efforts to include worldwide training on the Holocaust and measures for genocide prevention for information officers from the United Nations information centres, the first of which was held for centres in the Americas region at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in May. It also launched an online pedagogical tool in English and French to support the development of educational curricula by Member States, "Electronic notes for speakers", and created an educational exhibition on the Holocaust for the guided tours route at Headquarters in New York. The Department also held the second annual ceremony for the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, which highlighted the rights of the disabled and the importance of education in eliminating discrimination. Two exhibitions were mounted to mark the occasion, one on the Roma and Sinti peoples and another featuring artwork of Holocaust survivors. As part of its ongoing film series, the programme screened *I Only Wanted to Live* and *Spell Your Name*, as well as the premiere of the award-winning documentary *Steal a Pencil for Me*. Discussion papers were drafted by Simone Veil (France) and Xu Xin (China).

Presentations were given to students at McGill University (Canada), the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged, B'Nai B'rith and the New York City-based Holocaust Memorial Committee. Commemorative posters and information cards were published in English, French and Spanish.

B. Publishing activities

69. The Department of Public Information continues to extend the reach of the publishing activities of the United Nations and its agencies through its offices and bookshops in Geneva and New York, via 90 sales agents in 61 countries and by means of its e-commerce driven website. The website was redesigned in June, making it easier to navigate, and new search features were added. During the period under review, a new programme to sell electronic (PDF) versions of selected publications was launched. The site is adding about 300 new customers every month and currently features over 6,000 available books and related products.

70. United Nations bookshops continue to serve delegates, staff and visitors in New York and Geneva. In Geneva, the Department is working with the United Nations Postal Administration to operate a counter for sales of publications and stamp products, providing an additional outlet for the community there. The proposed closure of the General Assembly Building because of the capital master plan will greatly affect the United Nations Bookshop. In order to continue serving the community at Headquarters, the Bookshop is exploring various options.

71. The Department of Public Information worked with 15 agencies, including all the major multilateral development banks, to publish more than 3,000 procurement notices during the first five months of the year in print and online versions of *UN Development Business*. That represents a 12.7 per cent increase over 2006 in terms of output, with more than 2,000 subscribers in over 100 countries.

VI. A culture of evaluation

72. Renewing its commitment to maintaining a culture of evaluation through the assessment of strategic priorities, the Department is taking steps to form stronger linkages across its divisions. These include undertaking assessments and evaluations as part of the annual programme impact review that will focus on specific thematic priorities with a view to deriving lessons relevant to the Department as a whole. The Department continues to enhance its strategic approach by continuously responding to feedback from users and clients on its products and activities. Two recent examples can be cited:

(a) According to a survey by *UN Chronicle Online*, 80 per cent of respondents said that they found it to be a highly satisfactory publication on United Nations-related issues. The vast majority — 90 per cent — indicated that their understanding of United Nations issues and activities had improved as a result of reading the online magazine. Comparing it to other sources covering the issues and activities of the United Nations, 52 per cent said that the *UN Chronicle* was as good as, and 40 per cent said it was better than, most sources. With reference to the survey results, the *UN Chronicle* is being sharpened to better meet the needs of its

readership through the provision of more thought-provoking features and information in its online edition; at the same time, it is working to increase its readership by the online placement of editions in all six languages;

(b) After three years of highlighting underreported issues and stories to the global media, the Department of Public Information sought feedback from its United Nations system partners on the initiative, "Ten stories the world should hear more about". Overall, 75 per cent of survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the general value of the project. In terms of gauging the Department's role in coordinating and leading the "Ten stories" project, 80 per cent declared satisfaction. Over 70 per cent of respondents also asserted that they were satisfied with the promotional activities (press releases, media placement) carried out by the Department. The majority of respondents agreed that the project should continue in its current form or with some modifications, and the Department is currently reviewing possible changes to the project in the light of those suggestions.

VII. Conclusion

73. In the fulfilment of its mission to strategically communicate the work and purposes of the United Nations to achieve the greatest public impact, the Department continues to tell the United Nations story to people throughout the world through the use of both traditional means of communication and new information and communications technologies. Through innovation, creativity and partnership with the public and private sectors, it provides targeted delivery of information, builds greater grass-roots support for the Organization and connects with new audiences. Adopting a strategic approach to its work, it has been able to set priorities in a manner that has enabled it to do not only what is most pressing, but also what is most achievable — and to do it where it can have the greatest impact. This has been achieved through closer consultations with Secretariat departments, greater system-wide coordination and the systematic evaluation of its activities. The Department intends to strengthen this integrated approach, which has proved to be practical and effective, in developing and implementing sound communications strategies on key issues for the Organization.